

RESOURCE GUIDE

CERTIFICATION

MBE | WBE | VBE | BEPD



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RESOURCE GUIDE – CERTIFICATION

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TYPES OF CITY CERTIFICATION

The purpose of this Certification Resource Guide is to provide helpful information to interested parties, but it is not a complete description of the requirements for certification and cannot be relied upon as an authoritative interpretation of the Municipal Code of Chicago (“MCC”), the rules and regulations promulgated by the Chief Procurement Officer (“CPO”), the policies of the City of Chicago (“City”) Department of Procurement Services (“DPS”), or the relevant federal laws and regulations, which take precedence over this document.

As the contracting, certification and compliance authority for the City, DPS maintains the highest commitment to diversity, transparency, and innovation while continuously expanding the resources and programs that empower citizens to become involved in contracting opportunities with the City.

In 2020, the City of Chicago engaged the law firm Colette Holt & Associates to conduct a Disparity Study for the City’s Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprise (M/WBE) Program for its construction contracts. Among the outcomes of the Disparity Study was a recommendation to create an office responsible for reviewing, developing, and implementing strategies to ensure equitable access to City contracts to support *“the growth and success of M/WBEs.”* To that end, DPS established the Office of Contracting Equity.

The Office of Contracting Equity is led by the Managing Deputy for Contracting Equity who, under the supervision of the CPO is given authority to oversee DPS functions related to incentives and programs, certification, and compliance monitoring. DPS currently offers six types of certification:

- ★ Minority-Owned Business Enterprise (MBE)
- ★ Women-Owned Business Enterprise (WBE)
- ★ Veteran-Owned Business (VBE)
- ★ Business Enterprises Owned or Operated by People with Disabilities (BEPD)
- ★ Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE)
- ★ Airport Concession Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (ACDBE)

BENEFITS OF CERTIFICATION

MBE OR WBE PARTICIPATION CREDIT

The City's overall goals for non-construction contracts are to award an annual dollar value of not less than 25% to certified MBEs and 5% to certified WBEs for all such City contracts. The City's aspirational goals for construction contracts are to award an annual dollar value of 26% to certified MBEs and 6% to certified WBEs for all such City contracts.

DIRECTORY OF CERTIFIED FIRMS

MBE, WBE and VBE firms certified by the City or Cook County and BEPD, DBE and ACDBE firms certified by the City are listed in the City's directory of certified firms. These listings provide an easy point of reference to contractors that are looking for certified firms to assist in fulfilling its participation objectives. The directory can be found at: chicago.mwdbe.com.

RECIPROCITY

The City has a reciprocity program with Cook County whereby the City and Cook County recognize and accept MBE and WBE certification by either entity. This means that firms that are certified by Cook County as MBEs or WBEs do not need to also be certified by the City as MBEs or WBEs to participate in the City's MBE/WBE programs.

The City is also a member of the Illinois Unified Certification Program. Certification by a member of the IL UCP as a DBE or ACDBE is accepted by the City. The members of the IL UCP are as follows: the City, the Illinois Department of Transportation, the Chicago Transit Authority, METRA and PACE. Certification by other entities having DBE or ACDBE programs may be accepted by members of the IL UCP without full re-certification subject to the requirements of the IL UCP.

ELIGIBILITY FOR BID INCENTIVES AND PROGRAMS

Certification by the City may make a firm eligible to earn certain bid incentives or to participate in certain City programs. For example, MBEs and WBEs are eligible to bid on non-construction contracts that have been identified as Target Market contracts, which are exclusive to MBEs and WBEs.

MBE, WBE, BEPD and VBE firms are also automatically deemed to be eligible to bid on (i) construction contracts solicited under the Mid-size Business Initiative (MBI) Construction Program, (ii) non-construction contracts solicited under the Non-Construction Mid-size Business Initiative (NMBI) Program, and (iii) construction contracts solicited under the Small Business Initiative-1 (SBI-1) Construction Program.

Certification as a BEPD or VBE may allow contractors to be eligible for bid incentives related to the utilization of BEPDs or VBEs on City contracts. For example, the City established a BEPD Utilization incentive designed to increase the opportunities for business owned by people with disabilities to do business with the City and is based upon a bidder's commitment to utilize a BEPD as the prime contractor or as a subcontractor in the performance of the contract. The incentive can be valued at up to 4% of the contract base bid and is applied on a sliding scale based on the percentage of total dollar contract amount performed by BEPD. In addition, service-disabled veterans will be eligible to be certified under this enhanced program and utilized for this incentive.

The Veteran-Owned and Small Business Joint Venture Bid Incentive provides for a 5% bid incentive for qualifying VBEs or joint ventures that include a veteran-owned business and local small business enterprise. The Veteran-Owned Subcontractor Incentive provides for a bid incentive of up to 2% and is designed to encourage the utilization of veteran-owned subcontractors in the performance of construction contracts. This is a tiered incentive based on the level of utilization, from 0.5% to 2%.

The VBE Pilot Program establishes contract-specific VBE goals of up to 1% if there are more than three (3) VBEs certified in one or more areas of specialty for contracts of \$10,000 or more.

For more information, see the Bid Incentives and Programs Guide and the Rules page of DPS's website: <https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/dps/provdrs/comp.html>

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

This section generally describes a few of the key criteria required for certification and other relevant and useful information related to certification. This section does not include a complete description of the requirements for certification and cannot be relied upon as an authoritative interpretation of the MCC, the rules and regulations promulgated by the CPO, the policies of DPS, or the relevant federal laws and regulations, which take precedence over this document.

OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL

The firm must be a for profit business that is at least 51% owned and controlled by minorities, women, veterans, or individuals with disabilities, as applicable.

In the case of BEPD certification, a nonprofit corporation that is not owned by individuals with disabilities may also be eligible for certification as a BEPD if (1) the purpose of the entity includes providing, directly or indirectly, services to individuals with disabilities; (2) the nonprofit corporation employs individuals with disabilities and pays them an hourly wage that is not less than the federal minimum wage and not on a piece work basis; and (3) the entity's management and daily business operations are controlled by one or more individuals with disabilities as set forth in Section 2-92-586 of the MCC. Furthermore, a for-profit corporation may be eligible for certification as a BEPD if it is owned directly, indirectly, or beneficially 51% or more by one or more individuals with disabilities and whose management and daily business operations are controlled by one or more individuals with disabilities as set forth in Section 2-92-586 of the MCC.

VIABILITY AND INDEPENDENCE

The firm must be an economically viable business and demonstrate the ability to independently perform in the firm's Area of Specialty or expertise without substantial reliance upon non-eligible individuals.

SIZE

The firm must be a small business based on the gross receipts of the firm and its affiliates.

ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE

For certification in construction areas of specialty under the MBE/WBE Construction Program, the eligible owners must be economically disadvantaged, meaning their personal net worth does not exceed the limit set forth in the MCC.

LOCATION

MBEs, WBEs, VBEs, and BEPDs must be located in the Illinois counties of Cook, DuPage, Kane, Will, Lake, or McHenry (the "Six County Region").

ADDITIONAL MBE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

In order to participate in the City's MBE or WBE certification program, a firm must be owned by socially disadvantaged individuals. An individual's social disadvantage must stem from race, ethnic origin, long-term residence in an environment isolated from the mainstream of American society, or other similar causes stemming from circumstances beyond the individual's control and not common to individuals who are not socially disadvantaged. Protected classes are defined differently in the City of Chicago's M/WBE Programs for Construction and Non-Construction.

MBE Program - Construction

- African-American or Black
- Hispanic (persons of Spanish culture with origins in Mexico, South or Central America or Caribbean Islands, regardless of race)
- Asian American (persons having origins in any of the original peoples of East Asia, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, or the Pacific Islands)
- American Indians, which includes persons having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America) and who maintain tribal affiliation or community attachment

MBE Program – Non-Construction

- African-American or Black
- Hispanic (persons of Spanish culture with origins in Mexico, South or Central America or Caribbean Islands, regardless of race)
- Asian American (persons having origins in any of the original peoples of East Asia, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, or the Pacific Islands)

AFFIDAVIT OF INDIVIDUAL SOCIAL DISADVANTAGE

Other individuals, who are not presumed to be socially disadvantaged, may be eligible to apply for MBE certification on a case-by-case basis, through a finding of social disadvantage. The City will consider the totality of the circumstances in deciding whether an individual suffers from social disadvantage.

The applicant has the burden of proving, by a preponderance of evidence, that they are socially disadvantaged. The written account of social disadvantage must demonstrate:

- They have personally suffered social disadvantage, not merely claim membership in a group that could be considered socially disadvantaged.
- The specific instances of discrimination which was experienced by recounting in detail how development in the business world has been prevented by one or more of the listed causes or similar causes.
- The social disadvantage is rooted in treatment which was experienced in American society, not in other countries.
- The social disadvantage is chronic, long-standing and substantial, not fleeting or insignificant.
- The social disadvantage must have negatively affected entry into, and/or advancement in, the business world.

The closer social disadvantage can be linked to impairment of business opportunities, the stronger the case for recognition of individual social disadvantage. Full program rules are available on the DPS website, www.chicago.gov/dps.

Additional BEPD Eligibility Requirements

Before a general application for certification as a BEPD can be submitted, it must first be determined if owners are indeed individuals with disabilities.

DPS works in collaboration with the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) on the verification process. A Physician's Certification Regarding Disability Form for all owners, officers, or directors that are individuals with disabilities must be submitted to MOPD. This includes a narrative from each individual's physician, which certifies the individual's disability and describes the functional limitation of the declared disability. Service-Disabled Veteran applicants must submit to MOPD either State of Illinois documents certifying the applicant is a qualified service-disabled veteran-owned small business or documentation from the U.S. government certifying that the veteran has a service-related disability, and a copy of a VA verification document.

Full rules and the Disability Declaration Affidavit for Business Enterprise owned by People with Disabilities is available on the DPS website, www.chicago.gov/DPS.

ADDITIONAL VBE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

VBE certification can be awarded to small and local business that are owned and operated by veterans who have been generally or honorably discharged. To take advantage of the City's veteran programs and incentives, veteran-owned businesses must be VBE certified by the City.

At the time of application, businesses will be required to upload a letter on company letterhead and supporting documentation including DD-214 and/or DD-215 forms.

HOW TO APPLY FOR CERTIFICATION

MBE/WBE/VBE/BEPD

Firms interested in certification with the City must submit an online application. The City will not accept paper applications. Please apply online at <https://chicago.mwdbe.com> and attach all required documents to the online application. There are webinars, tutorials and technical help available online at the website above, as well as workshops offered by the Department of Procurement Services.

BEFORE YOU APPLY

We encourage vendors to take part in DPS's free How to Become Certified Workshop, review the rules and regulations that guide the program, sign-up for DPS Alerts, and view previously recorded workshops on YouTube.

www.chicago.gov/DPS

Each application is thoroughly reviewed for material omissions or deficiencies. An application containing omissions or deficiencies will be returned to the applicant. If the application is complete, the applicant will be required to submit an application fee of \$250.00.

After receipt of the application fee, the City will begin a review of the application and supporting documentation to determine whether the applicant is eligible for certification. Applicants may be required to provide additional documentation and answer questions as part of the application process. Failure to provide the requested documentation will result in the closing of the applicant's file, and certification will not be granted. The City may also require a site visit interview at the applicant's office or warehouse.

AREA OF SPECIALTY

Certification is limited to the Area(s) of Specialty or expertise determined by the CPO to be most reflective of the applicant's demonstrated specialty or expertise. The City uses the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) to determine Areas of Specialty, which can be found at <http://www.census.gov/eos/www/naics/>. An applicant may be certified in more than one area of expertise, so long as the eligibility criteria are met.

PROFESSIONAL DECLARATION OF ELIGIBILITY PROGRAM

The Professional Declaration of Eligibility (PDE) Program is an expedited certification process that authorizes licensed attorneys, certified public accountants (CPAs), and certifying agencies to attest that an applicant meets the requirements of the applicable certification program and that the application package does not contain any false information. Only professionals licensed by the State of Illinois for at least three years are eligible to submit PDE applications.

The following firms are not eligible to apply through the PDE program:

- (1) Applicants for DBE, ACDBE, VBE, and BEPD certification;
- (2) MBE or WBE applicants seeking certification in construction, as defined herein,
- (3) Applicants seeking certification as a supplier or distributor, as defined by the City of Chicago Policy Regarding MBE, WBE, VBE, and BEPD Certification as a Supplier, Distributor, and/or Broker;
- (4) Any firm that has been denied certification by the City in the previous three years;
- (5) Any firm that has withdrawn a certification application with the City within the previous three years; and
- (6) Any firm that has graduated from the City's certification program within the previous three years.

For each application, the professional or certifying agency is required to submit a signed and dated Professional Declaration of Eligibility Statement in which it is required to attest, among other things, that the professional or certifying agency is eligible to participate in the PDE program and has no conflicts (such as a familial relationship with the owner of the firm or an ownership interest); the professional or certifying agency understands the City's certification rules and regulations; and that the applicant is eligible for certification based on the City's certification rules and regulations. The professional or certifying agency may be required to submit additional attestations in the Professional Declaration of Eligibility Statement as required by the CPO.

PDE applications must not be submitted unless the applicant meets all requirements for certification and all necessary documentation demonstrating the applicant's eligibility is provided to the City. If a PDE application is incomplete or additional information is needed, the City will review the application through the standard certification process.

All PDE applications are subject to audit by DPS to determine whether the firm is in compliance with the requirements for certification.

In the event DPS discovers errors or false statements in a PDE application, whether willful or non-willful, the professional submitting the PDE application may be subject to certain penalties including mandatory compliance sessions, requiring a Compliance Integrity Monitor to be retained, refund of any fees paid by the applicant, and loss of eligibility to submit applications through the program. DPS may also refer the professional to the Office of Inspector General and to the Department of Law for prosecution under the City's false statements ordinance.

DBE/ACDBE CERTIFICATION

Firms seeking to participate in the City's DBE or ACDBE programs must apply for certification and be certified by a member of the IL UCP in the Area of Specialty in which they seek to participate.

- A. Only firms certified as eligible DBEs or ACDBEs under the applicable federal regulations may participate as DBEs or ACDBEs in the respective DBE or ACDBE program.
- B. The eligibility of firms as DBE and ACDBEs must be determined based on the applicable standards of 49 C.F.R. Part 26, Subpart D and with respect to ACDBE also 49 C.F.R. Part 23 (collectively the "DBE/ACDBE Federal Regulations").

HURDLES TO THE APPLICATION

Incomplete Applications

Incomplete applications result in numerous requests for information and extend processing times. Applicants should carefully review the instructions and submit all required documentation with their applications. Appendix A: Sample documentation in support of Certification Application provides a high-level overview of the types of documentation that will be required when submitting a certification application.

Incorrect Type of Application Submitted

Incorrect types of applications submitted result in extended processing times. Applicants will be asked to answer a series of questions in the online application process, which will lead applicants to the correct application to be filed.

Failure to Timely or Fully Respond to Requests for Information

If the City determines that additional information is needed during the review of an application, the City will send a request for information or RFI to the applicant. Failure to respond to an RFI results in extended processing times and can ultimately lead to a closed or denied application. If an application is closed, the vendor must submit a new application and restart the process.

No Payment Received

The application fee for the local certification program is \$250.00. Applications cannot be assigned and processed until the application fee is received.

HELP FROM ASSIST AGENCIES

Assist Agencies are comprised of not-for-profit agencies and/or chamber of commerce agencies that represent the interests of small, minority and/or women-owned businesses. Amongst other offerings, these agencies work closely with the City to educate and assist interested vendors through the certification process. Applicants needing assistance with their applications may contact the City's Assist Agencies. The most recent list is available on the DPS website at www.chicago.gov/DPS

MAINTAINING YOUR CERTIFICATION

CERTIFICATION PERIOD

MBE, WBE, VBE, and BEPD Certification is valid from the effective date of the certification and only as to the Area(s) of Specialty or expertise specified therein. Certifications do not expire, but firms must remain compliant by submitting annual updates known as No Change Affidavits and alerting the DPS Office of Contracting Equity within 10 business days of changes which may impact eligibility.

NO CHANGE AFFIDAVITS

Certified firms must submit an annual No Change Affidavit. If a firm fails to file an annual No Change Affidavit this may result in the removal of a its certification.

CHANGES

Changes in a certified firm's ownership, management, officers or financial relationships, which may impact the firm's eligibility for certification must be communicated to the City in writing within ten (10) business days of the change(s). Failure to communicate changes will constitute grounds for the denial of continued eligibility or decertification of the firm.

EXPANSION REQUESTS

Firms desiring to be certified in additional areas of competence may submit an expansion request online by requesting to add or update a commodity code or by incorporating an expansion request in a No Change Affidavit submission. Until certification is awarded, participation on a contract in an uncertified area shall not count toward fulfillment of contract goals.

GRADUATION FROM THE MBE/WBE PROGRAM

Once a certified MBE or WBE firm exceeds applicable size standards it graduates from the program and is presumed to be an established business. A certified entity may be determined to be an established business as it relates to all or some of its Area of Specialty NAICS Codes. An established business may apply for re-certification at such time as it has information to show a significant change in its ownership, management, contractual relations, size, or in other functions bearing on its status as an established business.

CONSTRUCTION

A certified firm is presumed to be an established business under the MBE/WBE Construction Program if (1) the firm and its affiliates are no longer a Small Business as defined by the U.S. Small Business Administration as *"a business that has gross receipts averaged over its previous seven (7) fiscal years that do not exceed one and a half the size standards of the U.S. Small Business Administration set forth in 13 CFR Part 121, relevant to the scope(s) of work the firm seeks to perform on the City contracts,"* or (2) if the eligible individuals whose ownership was relied on for certification are persons whose personal net worth exceeds the program's personal net worth limits. See DPS's website for the current personal net worth limit.

NON-CONSTRUCTION

An entity certified as a City non-construction MBE/WBE program is presumed to be established business if its gross receipts, averaged over the previous three fiscal years, exceeds the business size standard set for in the MCC. See DPS's website for the current gross receipts limit.

PARTICIPATING ESTABLISHED BUSINESS STATUS FOR CERTIFIED MBEs AND WBEs

An MBE and/or WBE firm which cannot receive continued eligibility because it is an established business will be considered a participating established business as of the effective date of the City's determination. A participating established business may participate in the City's phased graduation program for a three-year period for reduced credit. For the first year, a participating established business can earn 75% MBE or WBE credit for its performance; in the second year, 50%; and in the third year, 25%. This graduated utilization helps businesses build capacity and maintain a competitive advantage as they diversify their contract portfolio and enter the marketplace as a prime contractor.

DENIALS, DETERMINATIONS OF INELIGIBILITY, OR DECERTIFICATION

AUTOMATIC DECERTIFICATION AND INELIGIBILITY FOR CERTIFICATION

Any certified firm which is debarred by the City, or which is declared ineligible to do business with the City pursuant to Chapter 1-23 of the MCC, is ineligible for continued certification by the City. In addition, such firms are automatically ineligible for certification as of the effective date of the debarment decision, or the determination that they are ineligible to do business with the City pursuant to Chapter 1-23 of the Municipal Code.

OTHER DECERTIFICATION REASONS

The City may decertify a certified firm, or find a certified firm to be ineligible for continued certification, if the CPO determines that any of the following are true:

- (1) the certified firm no longer satisfies the applicable certification requirements;
- (2) the certified firm, or an owner, officer or agent thereof, has made fraudulent misrepresentations to the City regarding utilization of certified firms or colluded with another making such misrepresentation in the preceding three years;
- (3) the certified firm is no longer eligible for City contracts;
- (4) the certified firm, or any owner, officer or agent thereof, in the preceding three years has committed a crime in connection with the execution or performance of any contract or a crime involving moral turpitude; or
- (5) the certified firm has been decertified by any other governmental agency.

PROCEDURE FOR OTHER DECERTIFICATION REASONS

In the event the CPO determines that a certified firm should be decertified based upon fraud, dishonesty, intentional misrepresentation of the firm's status, or other wrongdoing by the certified firm, or as a result of a decertification by any other governmental agency, the CPO will issue a "Preliminary Notice of Intent to Decertify" to the certified firm.

If the CPO determines that the certified firm should be declared no longer eligible for certification based upon a change in status of the certified firm, which does not reflect fraud, dishonesty, intentional misrepresentation of the firm's status, or other wrongdoing by the firm, the CPO will issue a "Preliminary Notice of Ineligibility for Continued Certification" to the certified firm.

Firms may submit a written appeal within fifteen (15) calendar days of its receipt of the preliminary notice of ineligibility or decertification. If a firm fails to submit a written appeal this will cause the CPO to accept the facts upon which the preliminary notice was based as admitted and the firm's certification will be removed.

EFFECT OF DECERTIFICATION OR INELIGIBILITY

Firms that have been decertified or determined to be no longer eligible for certification may not be used for MBE or WBE participation credit on City contracts or counted towards applicable bid incentives and will not be eligible for City programs based on their prior certification status.

Any decision by the CPO with respect to decertification of an applicant shall mean that, as of the date of decertification, the certification status of the applicant shall not continue on any City contract where the certified firm's performance was commenced prior to the effective date of the decertification.

However, any decision by the CPO to issue a Notice of Ineligibility for Continued Certification shall not affect the certification status of any contractor on any City contract where the certified firm's performance was commenced prior to the effective date of such notice.

SUSPENSION OF MBE/WBE/VBE OR BEPD CERTIFICATION

The certification of a certified MBE, WBE, VBE or BEPD firm will be immediately suspended when an individual owner whose ownership and control of the firm are necessary to the firm's certification dies or is incarcerated.

A firm may also be suspended when (i) there is adequate evidence to believe that there has been a material change in circumstances that may affect the eligibility of the certified firm to remain certified, or (ii) when the certified firm fails to notify the DPS in writing of any material change in circumstances as required or fails to timely file a No Change Affidavit.

While suspended, the certified firm may not be considered to meet a contract goal on a new contract. The certified firm may continue to perform under an existing contract executed before it received a Notice of Suspension and may be counted toward the contract goal during the period of suspension as long as it is performing a commercially useful function under the existing contract.

Following receipt of the Notice of Suspension, if the certified firm believes it is no longer eligible, it may voluntarily withdraw from the program, in which case no further action is required.

If the certified firm believes that its eligibility should be reinstated however, it must provide information demonstrating that it is eligible notwithstanding its changed circumstances within 30 days of receiving the Notice of Suspension. Upon receipt of this information, the DPS will either lift the suspension and reinstate the firm's certification or issue a preliminary notice of decertification or ineligibility.

APPLYING FOR CERTIFICATION AFTER MBE/WBE/VBE OR BEPD DECERTIFICATION

Decertification or ineligibility of a firm for continued certification will affect the firm's re-entry into the program in accordance with the following schedule:

- (1) Ineligible firms are not eligible to apply for re-certification for at least one year unless the Applicant demonstrates that extraordinary circumstances exist regarding its eligibility, and the CPO determines, in her sole discretion, that the one year waiting period may be waived.
- (2) Firms decertified due to any false, deceptive, or fraudulent material statement, contracting irregularities, improper conduct in connection with the performance of a contract, and/or criminal activity are ineligible to apply for re-certification for at least three years.
- (3) Firms decertified as a result of debarment, or as a result of ineligibility to do business with the City pursuant to Chapter 1-23 of the Municipal Code of Chicago, are not be eligible to apply for re-certification until such time as the debarment, or determination of ineligibility pursuant to Chapter 1-23, is no longer in force.

TRAINING & RESOURCES

DPS offers free workshops presented quarterly and monthly to educate citizens and business owners about the fundamentals of procurement and the latest developments in procurement, certification and compliance.

To view the workshop calendar and register go to: www.cityofchicago.org/dpsevents.

All workshops are also available on: www.youtube.com/ChicagoDPS.

CERTIFICATION/COMPLIANCE WORKSHOPS:

- How to Become Certified
- The Online Schedule A Application – MBE/WBE/VBE/BEPD
- The ABC's of DBE and ACDBE Certification
- Professional Declaration of Eligibility (PDE) Information Sessions
- Your Business Is Certified: Now What?
- Compliance 101
- All Access to Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities

APPENDIX A

SAMPLE DOCUMENTATION IN SUPPORT OF CERTIFICATION APPLICATION

The following represents a high-level overview of the types of documentation that are required to complete the certification application and as such should not be treated as an inclusive list. Full requirements are available within the application portal:

<https://chicago.mwdbe.com/>

OWNERSHIP INFORMATION

- Assumed Name Certificate.
- Stamped Article of Incorporation, Organization, or Association, or Certificate of Limited. Partnership or applicable organizing documents.
- Original and any amended Corporate By-Laws.
- Corporate/Board or Directors Meeting Minutes.
- Operating Agreement.
- Partnership Agreement.
- Certificates of Membership.
- Individual Ownership Statement – for each owner.
- Personal Net Worth Statement– for each owner.
- Franchise Agreements.
- Any additional documents requested such as corporate correspondence, employee hiring and termination letters, a signed letter detailing the owner’s role in the firm, or other records that demonstrate: (1) that the firm’s qualifying owner(s) possess(es) the power to direct the management, policies and objectives of the firm and to make all substantive day-to-day decisions of the firm and manage its essential operations, and (2) that the owner(s) maintain(s) full time participation in the management of the company’s day-to-day decision and operations.

EMPLOYEE INFORMATION

- Current Organization Chart.
- Most recent 4 weeks of payrolls, including all employee and management.
- If needed, separate compensation schedules for each officer, director and/or person in senior management and any agreements detailing a different compensation arrangement in the future.
- A table or list identifying any employees who have worked in the trades in the last year, specifying which trades and the number of employees in each trade.

FACILITY INFORMATION

- Lease agreements (with contact information for the landlord), including a copy of the most recent lease payment.
- Proof of ownership (deed, mortgage agreement or property tax bill).

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

- Most recent bank statement for all account(s) used by the firm.
- All bank signature card(s) and/or corporate resolution regarding access to accounts and signatories.
- Three years of W-2 or 1099 forms for each employee who meets the specified earning threshold.
- At a minimum, three years of federal and state corporate tax returns for Applicant firm and all Affiliates or, if not applicable, three years of the most recent U.S. individual income tax returns including ALL attachments and schedules.
- At a minimum, three years of the highest level of financial statement available which has been audited, reviewed, or compiled, including a balance sheet and a statement of income prepared by an independent certified public accountant.
Note: If these documents do not exist, the Applicant firm must certify to this fact and provide a written explanation along with whatever financial documents are available.
- Loan Agreements from the last three years for an amount greater than or equal to \$10,000.
- Line of Credit and/or Letters of Credit.
- Documents that outline bond limits.
- Certificate of Insurance.

LICENSES AND REGISTRATIONS

- All current business licenses, permits, and/or pending applications.
- All listed current individual licenses, permits, certificates, and/or pending applications.

EQUIPMENT INFORMATION

- Title and purchase documentation if owned.
- Lease agreements with proof of most recent payment if leased.

INVENTORY

- If applicable, all inventory (description, quality, value) held by Applicant firm during the last six months that was intended for sale, not internal use.
- If applicable, documentation in support of supplier and/or distributor status.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Resume (Owner, Director, Officer, Manager, any Stockholder).

